

# Transition Planning:

## A Guidebook for Youth, Young Adults and Their Families





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## Introduction

### Why Transition?

When you hear the word transition, many things may come to your mind. Transition means “a process of change” and there are many transitions you will make in your life. This workbook will look specifically at the transition into adulthood. Everyone has a lot of things to consider during this time in their life, but for someone with special health care needs there may be some extra steps you need to take. This may include, finding the right providers for you as an adult, finding new health insurance, and learning what is needed to have the most independent life possible. This workbook will be the beginning steps in the planning process towards your transition to adult living.

### How to Use This Workbook...

This workbook is divided into different sections. Each section describes an area that you may want to start planning for as an adult. Some sections might be more useful to you than others. This is your workbook so move around and use the information and tips that are the most helpful to you. Each section will include background information on the topic and offer tips, tools, and strategies to help you in your planning. There is also room in the back of the workbook for you to make notes.

While you can use this workbook on your own, it's encouraged to be used as a guide when talking to your parent/guardian about your transition to adult living. It may also be helpful for you to discuss certain sections with professionals such as doctors, nurses, and social workers that may help coordinate your care.



## Health Care Transition

### Health Care Financing

Sometimes your health insurance changes as you get older. How you are going to pay for your health care needs as an adult is a very important thing to think about. It is also important to know when these changes may happen and what your options are. Some things to consider:

If you are currently on your family's health plan:

- At what age will your coverage end? (Dependent coverage is typically available up to age 26 but it is important to review your policy.)
- Can you stay on the family health plan beyond the age requirement as a disabled adult?

If you are currently on a government-funded program (such as Medicaid or Medicare):

- How long are you eligible for this program?
- Do you have to renew or reapply every year?
- Will you still be eligible for this program as an adult?

There are many ways to obtain health insurance, all with different costs and benefits. Additional options may include the Health Insurance Marketplace, employment, or if you are attending college, a college health plan.

### Adult Providers

It's important to start having a conversation with your providers about how your health care will change when you become an adult. Some providers, such as pediatricians, will not be able to see patients after they reach a certain age. You want to be prepared for this change. If your provider cannot see you as an adult, they may be able to help you find a new doctor.



## Health Care Transition

It is best to have a plan for this transition between providers. Here are a few questions you can use to start the conversation:

- What age do I need to transfer to a new doctor?
- Do you have suggestions for providers that may be a good fit for me?
- Will you help me prepare a medical summary and emergency plan?
- Will you communicate with my new providers during this transition time?

### Health Care Skills

As you become more independent, you may need to learn some new skills, especially health care skills, if you have special health care needs. These include things that may have been taken care of for you in the past, such as getting prescriptions refilled, making doctor's appointments, or setting an alarm to remind you to take medications. Using the health care skills checklist below will help you to see what skills you already know and what skills you may need to learn.

#### Parent Tips



- Let your child meet privately with providers at appointments.
- Start planning health care transition early.
- Research the options available on your family health plan.



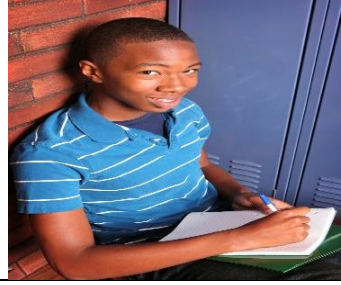
#### Youth Tips

- Meet privately with your provider at appointments.
- Take more control of your health care activities.

#### Health Care Skills Checklist (Check items you can do)

- ☐ I can describe my chronic illness or disability to others.
- ☐ I know the names and dosage of my medications and am responsible for taking them as prescribed.
- ☐ I know how to contact the doctor's office to make an appointment.
- ☐ I check in for my appointments independently and complete forms on my own.
- ☐ I prepare questions to ask my doctors, nurses, and therapists.





## Educational Transition

### **Transition and Special Education**

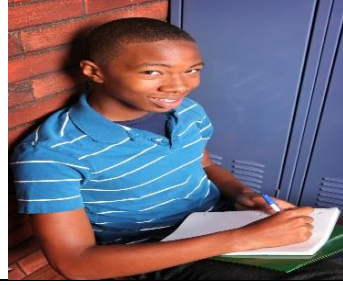
If you receive special education services, you will have a yearly meeting at your school to discuss and update your IEP plan. IEP stands for Individualized Education Program and is a written plan for students with disabilities. Transition planning is an important part of the IEP that should be started by the age of 16 and can help you work towards your goals for after high school. If you do not receive special education services, skip to the "Beyond High School" section listed below.

#### *What will a transition plan include?*

The transition plan is the section of the IEP that focuses on your transition goals and any supports/services you may need to help you meet your goals. It should include opportunities for you to learn more about employment, college or trade schools, daily living skills, community participation, and many other things to prepare you for life as an adult. For transition planning to be successful it should be meaningful to your vision and goals.

### **Beyond High School**

Planning for your future after high school should start early. If you have special health care needs, there may be some extra steps you need to take. The most important thing is staying healthy. You may have difficulty working or going to school if you are not healthy. That is why it is important to remember your health care as you begin setting goals for your future. If you plan to move after high school, you may need to find new providers that are closer to where you will be living. Working with your doctor and health insurance company to find new providers that accept your insurance and help with this transition process is encouraged. Remember to discuss your future goals and plans with your family and ask for help when needed.



## Educational Transition

### If you are heading off to college

- ☐ Find local providers and pharmacies in the area where you will be living.
- ☐ Ask if the college has a student health center.
- ☐ Contact the school's disability office for accommodations, if needed.
- ☐ Prepare a medical summary in case of an emergency.

### **Employment Assistance**

Finding a job is not always easy. That is why it is important to plan for employment and learn job skills while you are still in school. In high school you may have opportunities to attend training programs, job shadow, volunteer, or Co-op. In college there may be work-study or internships available to help you gain skills for employment. All these activities can help you decide on a career path and prepare you for finding employment as you get older.

If you have a disability, it will be important to talk to the guidance counselors at school and/or your IEP team about what supports you need. You may also be eligible for employment assistance through agencies such as Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) or Michigan Works!. You can find contact information for these agencies in the last section of this workbook titled "Community Agencies".

### **Parent Tips**



- Let your child lead any meetings you might have about their education and employment.
- Encourage your child to explore employment & volunteer opportunities.

### **Youth Tips**



- Don't be afraid to ask for the supports you need in school and at work.
- Take advantage of training/volunteer opportunities and part-time employment.



## Adult Living

### Independent Living Skills

Whether you plan to live by yourself, with your family, or with roommates when you get older, you will need to learn some things that will help you become more independent. Some of these things include:

Daily Living Skills: These skills include cooking, cleaning, self-care, and household safety. Most likely you already know some or most of these skills through chores or helping around the house.

Decision Making: Adults make many decisions every day. Some decisions are more serious than others. Begin to plan for what decisions you will make on your own and what decisions you might want to rely on a trusted person to help you make.

Transportation: Getting from one place to another is an important part of daily life. Whether you are living by yourself or with others, you should begin to plan for transportation needs. That may include learning to drive and getting a driver's license. It may also include learning how to take the bus, train, taxi, or using transportation apps, such as Uber and Lyft. Calling friends or family members for a ride, walking, or biking, may also be available options.

### Housing

As you begin to plan for your transition to adult life one of the most important things, and sometimes exciting, is the prospect of where you will live. Some people may remain at home with their family. Other people may want to live on their own or with roommates in an apartment or even someday own their own home. This is a decision you will have to make. Here are some things to think about:





## Adult Living

- Identify interests and options for future living arrangements, including supports if needed.
- Investigate assistive technology tools that can increase independent living and community involvement.
- Pursue and use local transportation options available in your area.

### **Managing Money**

Paying bills and managing money are important skills that adults need to learn. You should learn money management skills such as balancing a checkbook or paying utility bills. While you are learning these skills you also want to consider how you plan to earn an income. For many people income will come from employment. For others income may come from Social Security benefits. Consider the following:

- Determine your need for financial support
- Investigate money management and identify necessary skills
- Apply for any financial support programs that may be needed

### **Guardianship and Alternatives**

At age 18, you become your own guardian and are responsible for making your own decisions. If you still need help with making decisions after you turn 18, there are options. Some questions for you and your family to consider would include:

- What are my main concerns for my future? Are they financial, medical, or legal concerns?
- What decisions will I be able to make on my own?
- What decisions will I need assistance making?



## Adult Living

Below is a list of *some* options that you and your family may consider if you will need help with making decisions as an adult. It's encouraged to start exploring your options when you turn 17. Some of the actions listed below must be done through the court system and may have legal and court fees. Seek qualified legal counsel if needed.

- ❑ **Natural Supports:** receiving guidance and support from your family and friends. You still have control of all your personal information and choose how and when to involve others.
- ❑ **Supported Decision Making:** a process or plan that allows you to make choices about your life with support from a team of individuals that you choose, such as family, friends, and professionals.
- ❑ **Authorization for Release of Information Form:** a document that allows your providers to share information with a specific person. You determine the information that can be shared and with whom.
- ❑ **Designation of Patient Advocate Form:** a document that gives someone else the ability to make medical decisions for you if you become unable to make decisions on your own.
- ❑ **Joint Bank Account, Limited Accounts, and Cosigners:** a bank account shared by two or more people with or without limited access to funds. Discuss available options with your financial institution.
- ❑ **Representative Payee:** a person who receives and manages Social Security benefits on behalf of another person.
- ❑ **Power of Attorney (POA):** a legal document in which you give another person of your choosing the right to handle specific decisions. A POA does not take away your rights and has no court involvement.
- ❑ **Limited/Partial Guardianship:** gives your rights in certain areas of decision making to a court-appointed guardian.
- ❑ **Full Guardianship:** gives all your decision-making rights to a court-appointed guardian.



## Bringing it all Together

### Transition Plan of Care

Now that you have learned about the different areas of transition to adulthood, it is a good idea to start putting a plan in place to help you reach your future goals. A Transition Plan of Care can help you stay organized and remember the different things you may need to do to get ready for adult life. A Transition Plan of Care can be on paper, or it can be done on a computer. However you want to keep it is fine. If someone is helping you put a plan together be sure to tell them how you would like to keep it.

#### *What should a Transition Plan of Care include?*

A Transition Plan of Care may look different for everyone. It will typically include goals that you have for yourself as you get older. For each goal, you would list the activities that need to be completed to help you reach your goals. For each activity, you can create a list of who will be responsible to do these things. The person responsible can be you, your parent/caregiver, family member, nurse, or a care manager you are working with. Be sure you are comfortable with everything that is included in your plan.



#### **Youth Tips**

- Now is the time to speak up! Make sure you are heard, and your personal goals are included.

#### *Who can help me put a Transition Plan of Care together?*

A Transition Plan of Care can be put together with help by someone at your doctor's office or any other person/program that is helping you get ready for the transition to adult life.



## Community Agencies: Navigating the Maze

This workbook has looked at health care transition, educational transition, and adult/independent living. Putting all these different topics together in a plan of care can help keep you organized. When you need assistance to reach some of your future goals, you might find yourself working with different organizations and agencies, even programs at the state and federal level. So, who do you go to? And what do you ask for? This section should give you some guidance on navigating your way to find help. It is also a place to keep notes and find contact information for some helpful resources.

### Making the Call...

Don't know what to ask when you call? Consider what information/support you want from this agency. Writing down what you want to say before you make the call may be helpful. Below is a simple script you can use:

Sample Script for calling community agencies:

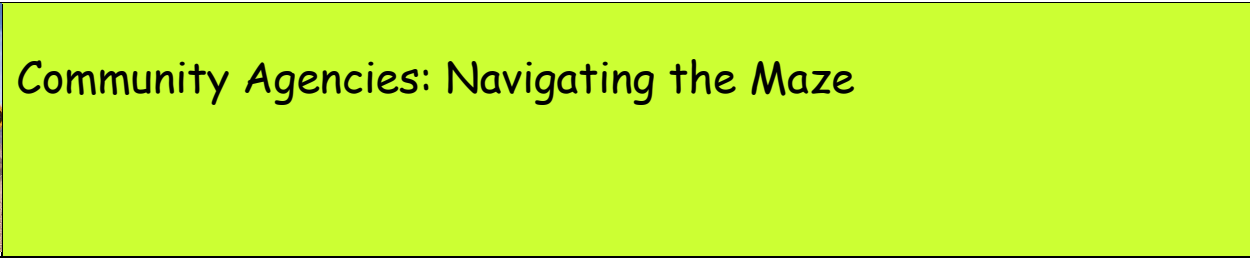
"Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I have questions about \_\_\_\_\_. Can you please connect me with someone who can help?"



If you will be contacting many community agencies here is a tip. Keep a notebook with the date you called, names of people you spoke with, the action to be taken, and the expected date of completion.



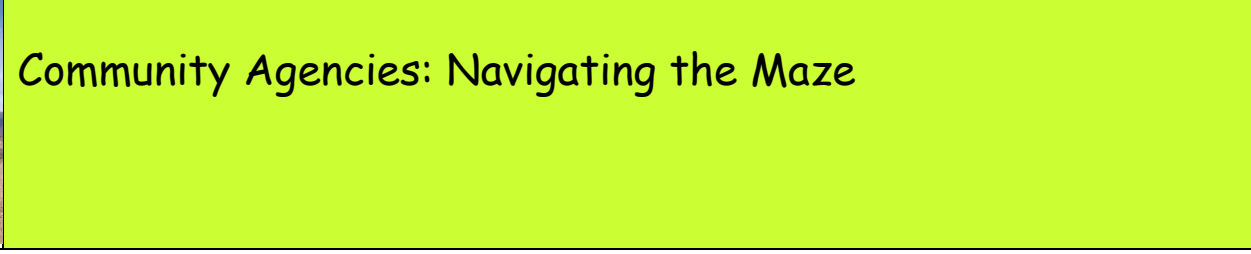
Use the following notes section to keep contact information handy.



## Community Agencies: Navigating the Maze

[illegible]





## Community Agencies: Navigating the Maze

[illegible]



## Community Agencies: Navigating the Maze

AIDS Hotline	800-872-2437	American Cancer Society ( <a href="http://www.cancer.org">www.cancer.org</a> )	800-227-2345
Arc Michigan ( <a href="http://www.arcmi.org">www.arcmi.org</a> )	800-292-7851	Autism Society of Michigan ( <a href="http://www.autism-mi.org">www.autism-mi.org</a> )	517-882-2800
Center for Self-Determination ( <a href="http://www.self-determination.com">www.self-determination.com</a> )	734-722-7092	Children's Special Health Care Services ( <a href="http://www.michigan.gov/cshcs">www.michigan.gov/cshcs</a> )	800-359-3722
Community Resources & Referrals ( <a href="http://www.mi211.org">www.mi211.org</a> )	2-1-1	Cystic Fibrosis Foundation ( <a href="http://www.cff.org">www.cff.org</a> )	800-344-4823
Diabetes Foundation ( <a href="http://www.diabetesfoundationinc.org">www.diabetesfoundationinc.org</a> )	201-444-0337	Disability Rights Michigan ( <a href="http://www.drmmich.org">www.drmmich.org</a> )	800-288-5923
Easter Seals of Michigan ( <a href="http://www.easterseals.com/michigan">www.easterseals.com/michigan</a> )	800-757-3257	Epilepsy Center of Michigan ( <a href="http://www.epilepsymichigan.org">www.epilepsymichigan.org</a> )	800-377-6226
Health Insurance Marketplace ( <a href="http://www.healthcare.gov">www.healthcare.gov</a> )	800-318-2596	Learning Disability Association of Michigan ( <a href="http://www.laofmichigan.org">www.laofmichigan.org</a> )	616-284-1650
March of Dimes ( <a href="http://www.marchofdimes.org">www.marchofdimes.org</a> )	888-663-4637	Make-A-Wish Foundation of Michigan ( <a href="http://www.wish.org/michigan">www.wish.org/michigan</a> )	800-622-9474
Michigan Alliance For Families ( <a href="http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org">www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org</a> )	800-552-4821	Michigan Assistive Technology Resource (MATR)	800-274-7426
Medicine Assistance Tool ( <a href="http://www.mat.org">www.mat.org</a> )	571-350-8643	Michigan Dental Association ( <a href="http://www.michigandental.org">www.michigandental.org</a> )	800-589-2632
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) ( <a href="http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs">www.michigan.gov/mdhhs</a> )	517-335-9030	Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council ( <a href="http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/keep-mi-healthy/mentalhealth/developmentaldisability">www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/keep-mi-healthy/mentalhealth/developmentaldisability</a> )	517-335-3158
MDHHS Abuse & Neglect hotline	855-444-3911	Michigan Family to Family ( <a href="http://www.f2fmichigan.org">www.f2fmichigan.org</a> )	
MDHHS Adult Home Help/Chore Services Program	800-979-4662	Michigan Family Voices ( <a href="http://www.michiganfamilyvoices.org">www.michiganfamilyvoices.org</a> )	800-292-7851
MDHHS Division on Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing	877-499-6232	Michigan Rehabilitation Services ( <a href="http://www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/mrs">www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/mrs</a> )	800-605-6722
MDHHS Medicaid Beneficiary Help Line	800-642-3195	MI Rx-drug discount program ( <a href="http://www.mihealth.org/mirx">www.mihealth.org/mirx</a> )	800-259-8016
MDHHS The Heat & Warmth Fund (THAW)	800-866-8429	Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council ( <a href="http://www.misilc.org">www.misilc.org</a> )	833-808-7452
MDHHS Tuition Incentive Program (TIP)	888-447-2687	Michigan Works! Association	517-371-1100



## Community Agencies: Navigating the Maze

Muscular Dystrophy Association ( <a href="http://www.mda.org">www.mda.org</a> )	800-572-1717	National Alliance on Mental Illness ( <a href="http://www.namimi.org">www.namimi.org</a> )	517-485-4049
National Organization for Rare Disorders ( <a href="http://www.rarediseases.org">www.rarediseases.org</a> )	800-999-6673	National Parent Center on Transition & Employment ( <a href="http://www.pacer.org/transition">www.pacer.org/transition</a> )	888-248-0822
Poison Control ( <a href="http://www.poison.org">www.poison.org</a> )	800-764-7661	Special Olympics Michigan ( <a href="http://www.somi.org">www.somi.org</a> )	800-644-6404
Spina Bifida Association ( <a href="http://www.spinabifidaassociation.org">www.spinabifidaassociation.org</a> )	800-621-3141	Social Security Administration ( <a href="http://www.ssa.gov">www.ssa.gov</a> )	800-772-1213
The Family Center for Children & Youth with Special Health Care Needs	800-359-3722	United Cerebral Palsy Association of Michigan ( <a href="http://www.mi-ucp.org">www.mi-ucp.org</a> )	800-827-4843

**You can find additional transition materials and resources on the Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) website:** [www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/cshcs/transition-to-adulthood](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/cshcs/transition-to-adulthood)